AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Presently Amended) A sheet accumulation processing device comprising:

~~a sheet holding means operable to extend from a first opening for conveying a plurality of sheets out of a second opening, residing on a housing, onto a sheet accumulating tray~~ a sheet holding means, said sheet holding means operable to extend from a first opening and for conveying a plurality of sheets onto a sheet accumulating tray, wherein said plurality of sheets are first conveyed out of a second opening to said sheet holding means; and

an opening shielding device disposed over the first opening wherein the opening shielding device retracts to an open position when the sheet holding means extends through the first opening to convey the plurality of sheets and said shielding device is in a closed position ~~otherwise~~ at all other times.

Please cancel claims 2-17, without prejudice to the subject matter therein.

18. (new) The sheet accumulation processing device as recited in claim 1, wherein the sheet holding means is rotated prior to being conveyed though the opening.

19. (new) A sheet accumulation processor including:

a sheet holding means, said sheet holding means operable to extend from a first opening and for conveying a plurality of sheets onto a sheet accumulating tray, wherein said plurality of sheets are first conveyed out of a second opening to said sheet holding means; and

an opening shielding device disposed over the first opening wherein the opening shielding device has a suspension plate supported by a support means coupled to an upper portion of the opening shielding device and an elevated plate, said opening shielding device liftably supported by a lifting means coupled to a lower portion of the shielding device

wherein the suspension plate and the elevating plates are in an open position when the sheet holding means extends through the opening to convey the plurality of sheets and in a closed position at all other times.

20. (new) The sheet accumulation processor as recited in claim 19, wherein said elevating plate is biased upward by at least one elastic member in a default position, whereby said at least one elastic member pushes said elevating place downward to achieve an open position and upward to achieve a closed position.

21 (new). A sheet accumulation processing device comprising:

a sheet holding means comprised of a first holding means and a second holding means, said first holding means for holding a matched sheet bunch, and a second holding means for receiving and conveying said matched sheet bunch;

said sheet holding means operable to extend from a first opening and for conveying said sheets onto a sheet accumulating tray, wherein said plurality of sheets are first conveyed out of a second opening to first holding means; and

an opening shielding device disposed over the first opening wherein the opening shielding device retracts to an open position when the second holding means extends through the first opening to convey the plurality of sheets and in a closed position at all other times.

22. (New) The device recited in claim 21, wherein said second holding means includes upper and lower levers for holding said sheet bunch on the top and bottom surfaces, said levers respectively rotably supported by a pair of shafts, said shafts configured to open and close said levers via a pair of arms, each of said arms respectively engaged in a grooves in the respective levers.

23 (New) The device as recited in claim 22, wherein said second holding means is configured with drive gear and attachments means such that said levers are opened at different angles at the same time when said second holding means is opened and closed.

24 (New). The device recited in claim 21, wherein said second sheet holding means includes upper and lower holding levers, said levers advanced and retreated by a drive motor connected to said levers through a gear and drive assembly that in turn moves a pair of arms connected by a pin, one of said arms configured such that it advances and retreats said levers by moving along a hole formed in a swinging plate.